

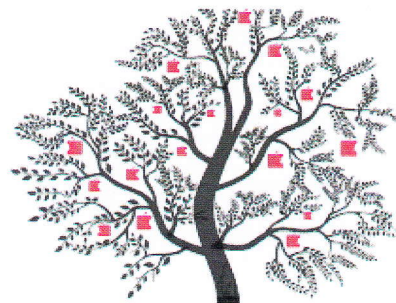
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REPORT
of the Expert Panel
on the
RE-ACCREDITATION OF
Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Split

Date of the site visit:

17th – 18th March 2014

April, 2014



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INTRODUCTION

This report on the re-accreditation of the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Split was written by the Expert Panel appointed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on the basis of the self-evaluation of the institution and supporting documentation and a visit to the institution.

Re-accreditation procedure performed by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), a public body listed in EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) full member, is obligatory once in five years for all higher education institutions working in the Republic of Croatia, in line with the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The Expert Panel is appointed by the ASHE Accreditation Council, an independent expert body, to perform an independent peer review based evaluation of the institution and their study programs.

The report contains:

- a brief analysis of the institutional advantages and disadvantages,
- a list of good practices found at the institution,
- recommendations for institutional improvement and measures to be implemented in the following period (and checked within a follow-up procedure), and
- detailed analysis of the compliance to the Standards and Criteria for Re-Accreditation.

The members of the Expert Panel were:

- Professor Elizabeth Osewska, Uniwersytet Kardinala Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Poland (Chairperson)
- Professor Harm Goris, School of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University, Netherlands
- Professor Michael Mullaney, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Ireland
- Professor Benas Ulevicius, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
- Dino Pašalić, Student, Catholic Faculty of Theology, Đakovo, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

In the analysis of the documentation, site visit and writing of the report the Panel was supported by the ASHE staff:

- Katarina Šimić Jagunić, coordinator
- Lida Lamza, translator

During the visit to the Institution the Expert Panel held meetings with the representatives of the following groups:

- The management;
- Working Group that compiled the self-evaluation and representatives of the Quality Assurance Board as well as the representative for international cooperation;
- Heads of Chairs;
- Teachers;
- Teaching assistants;
- Research projects' leaders;
- The students, i.e., a self-selected set of students present at the interview.

The Expert Panel also had a tour of the library, IT rooms, student register desk, and the classrooms at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Split, where they held a brief question and answer session with the students who were present.

Upon completion of re-accreditation procedure, the Accreditation Council renders its opinion on the basis of the Re-accreditation Report, an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution and the Report of Fulfilment of Quantitative Criteria which is acquired by the Agency's information system.

Once the Accreditation Council renders its opinion, the Agency issues an Accreditation Recommendation by which the Agency recommends to the Minister of Science, Education and Sports to:

1. **issue a confirmation** to the higher education institution which confirms that the higher education institution meets the requirements for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is positive,
2. **deny a license** for performing the higher education activities or parts of activities to the higher education institution, in case the Accreditation Recommendation is negative, or

3. **issue a letter of recommendation** for the period up to three (3) years in which period the higher education institution should remove its deficiencies. For the higher education institution the letter of recommendation may include the suspension of student enrolment for the defined period.

The Accreditation Recommendation also includes an Assessment of Quality of the higher education institution as well as recommendations for quality development.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATED INSTITUTION

NAME OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Split

ADDRESS: Zrinsko-frankopanska 19, 21 001 Split

NAME OF THE HEAD OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: Ante Mateljan, Ph. D., professor

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE: The Faculty consists of three organisational units: Secretariat, chairs and library. The Secretariat comprises the following services: Secretary's office (1), Student service (1), Personnel Office (1), Secretary's office for postgraduate study (1) Accountancy (2), Publishing activity (2), IT centre (1), Technical service (5). Scientific research work is constituted out of 13 chairs.

LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES (and levels): Theological-Catechetical Study (undergraduate), Theological-Catechetical Study (graduate), Philosophical-Theological Study (integrated), Christianity and Contemporary Culture (postgraduate course) and History of Theology and Christian Institutions (postgraduate course).

NUMBER OF STUDENTS (2012): 237

NUMBER OF TEACHERS (2012): Out of permanently employed teaching staff, there are 21 with an appointment in scientific- teaching grade, 3 in teaching grade, and 8 teaching associates.

NUMBER OF SCIENTISTS: 21

TOTAL BUDGET (2012): 9.702.997 kuna

MSES FUNDING (2012): 93.16%

OWN FUNDING (2012): 6.44%

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: According to mutual negotiations and the cooperation on the field teacher training and culture made between the Holy See and the Republic of Croatia, approved on 9th July 1997, the episcopal Ordinaries of Split Metropolitan on the behalf of Theology in Split, and Franciscan Province of the Holy Redeemer on the behalf of Franciscan theology in Makarska, on 30th September 1997 signed a Contract on merging and establishment of Faculty of Catholic Theology in Split. Contract of employment of Faculty of Catholic Theology as a constituent of the University in Split has been signed on 9th June 1999, and the same day

the Congregation for Catholic Education in Vatican issued on decree on establishment of that Faculty. Faculty of Catholic Theology opened its doors in the academic year 1999/2000.

In the year 2005, study programmes have been harmonised with the requirements of the Bologna process through the cooperation with the University of Split, and that harmonisation has been continued in accordance with Statutory regulations and requirements, with the aim of improving the quality of study programmes.

In the academic year 2009/2010, after obtaining a Licence from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and permission from the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Faculty launched two post-graduate doctoral university studies: Christianity and Contemporary Culture and The History of Theology and Christian Institutions.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXPERT PANEL

ADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. Catholic Theology Faculty is a rather small, but well organised, well-functional, very dynamic faculty with regional and national importance.
2. The Panel found a good atmosphere and culture of collaboration and interaction between Management and staff and between staff (teaching and administrative) and students. All parties engaged openly, honestly and constructively with the Panel. The management and staff are realistic in evaluating their strengths and challenges that lay ahead of them. They display a determination to continue to work to implement the Bologna Agreement, quality assurance in teaching and research and best practice. This is demonstrated for the Panel in the enormous work in writing the comprehensive new Study Programme designed by the special ad hoc Committee of management, staff and student representative.
3. The Faculty provides an important regional service in providing a centre of theological learning and research in this part of Croatia and also in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
4. The incorporation of the Faculty into the civil University provides much added value for resources and quality assurance for teaching and research. There a good relationship between these institutions and this is expressed in their close collaboration in quality assurance and the Faculty's commitment to harmonize their strategic plan with that of the University.
5. The Faculty monitors the enrolment quotas to ensure that they are in line with the needs of the society and its resources. It modifies the quotas in response to changing circumstances and demand. Also, the Faculty is pro-active and successful in promoting their programmes in the region.
6. For its relatively small size, the Faculty has an impressive ICT and technological services and resources. It capitalizes on the ICT and technological services by the state. The Panel noted the Faculty and students are actively encouraged and trained in the use of these facilities.
7. The student / teacher ratio is excellent and facilitates good personal contact between the staff and students. The Panel learned from the student feedback that staff is very approachable and helpful.
8. The institution encourages and supports students to participate actively in extra-circular and social activities.

9. For a relatively small Faculty, there are two in-house publications which are ranked A1 and A2 in the national rankings.
10. There is a strong tradition of organizing national and international symposia, and the proceedings are published in one of their journals.
11. Most of the agents involved with the Faculty, in whatever capacity, are involved in addressing specific problems or needs as regards the Faculty mission and strategy.
12. The Catholic Faculty of Theology in Split has a great potential in terms of human and material resources.
13. A system has its own logic, its own (organizational) culture, and produces its proper interactive processes and outcomes. Systemic thinking in CTF stresses the interaction of this system with its local and environment, then tries to identify all the challenges and react properly to the needs and expectations.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. There is a poor record of student and staff international mobility.
2. There is little evidence of high quality foreign language publications among teaching staff.
3. The Faculty has a poor record of national and international projects on an institutional basis.
4. The Faculty has not yet introduced functional mechanisms for monitoring and improvement of research quality in a more systemic way.

One of the doctoral programmes, History of Theology and Christian Institutions, does not have the legally required number of fully employed teaching staff from the institution. There has been a notable and serious decline in applications for this doctoral programme.

FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The management structures, internal communication and lines of accountability work well.
2. The institution has in response to enrolment challenges successfully initiated study programme promotions in schools, parishes, the University and information days in the region.

3. The Faculty monitors employment opportunities of future graduates and adapts the enrolment quotas in response to changing trends ensuring on-going positive teaching / student ratio.
4. The institution manages teaching and staff workload well.
5. The institution is well equipped with ICT and technological teaching recourses and students and staff are actively encouraged to utilize them. ICT support is readily available.
6. The institution invests in student centred services.
7. The Faculty supports well teaching staff in many ways and ensures that their additional activities are in line with the academic obligations and do not affect their internal commitments.
8. The institution has research projects in collaboration with other professional and cultural institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. The management needs to further develop and articulate their strategic objectives into a comprehensive strategic plan with appropriate monitoring mechanisms. This equally applies to their initiatives in quality assurance. The management should collaborate and harmonize their strategic plan with the evolving strategic plan / quality assurance policies of the University.
2. The quality assurance mechanisms should ensure that in the implementation of the new Study Programme, diverse assessment and teaching methods, including e-learning, will be used. Special attention should also be given to the question of assessment methods in a module actually correspond to its learning objectives, and that the learning objectives of the modules actually contribute cumulatively and coherently to the overall objectives of the whole programme. Foreign language texts and articles should be included in course bibliographies.
3. In implementing and monitoring the new Study Programme, attention must be given to the whole range of academic skills listed in the Dublin descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy, shifting the emphasis from solely reproducing knowledge ('regurgitating') to a more critical and creative thinking and analysis, research skills and social, intercultural communication skills.
4. The Faculty has already initiated a policy whereby future vacancies are more advertised, even internationally, to allow for greater competition in filling teaching posts, to ensure the best qualified teacher is appointed and also facilitate the possible appointment of lay theologians. This should be continued

and further implemented, especially in view of the number of Faculty members that are about to retire.

5. In order to promote a greater mobility among students and staff, the mobility possibilities and the foreign languages courses provided by the University should be more vigorously promoted among students by management in the early stages of studies. Some academic credit should be awarded for intermediate or advanced studies in a foreign language. For incoming students and staff, the English website of the Faculty should be made available soon and there should be possibilities for (elective) courses at the Faculty taught in a foreign language.
6. The management needs to develop a strategic plan for coordinating and improving collaboration research and publishing activity among teaching staff. The strategic plan should include a coherent research agenda that reflects and corresponds to the mission of the Faculty. The plan for translating the key publications into English should be carried out.
7. The Faculty should make better effort to contact and cooperate in various fields with the greater number of foreign institutions to ensure better mobility opportunities to teachers and students, and also attracts foreign staff. Due to the similar political, cultural and religious context, the good opportunity could be contact with strong theology faculties in Poland, Slovenia, Hungary and other central European countries.
8. The management should review the sustainability of the History of Theology and Christian Institutions doctoral programme.
9. The interaction between professors and doctoral students needs to be improved. Especially, the number and quality of text written in co-authorship with doctoral students. Also the research at postgraduate studies should be raised to a higher level. (e.g. publishing scientific papers before doctoral defence), which will consequently give better results in higher quality doctoral thesis.
10. For many years theological, ecumenical and inter-religious relations in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have suffered from the restrictions and political pressures imposed by the communist governments. In a new EU context, CTF in Split has a great chance and challenge to cultivate dialogue, sustain relationships between majority and minority churches and continue research in this field.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE TO THE STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR RE-ACCREDITATION

Institutional management and quality assurance

Criterion 1.1.

The Faculty does not have a fully documented strategic plan, however, it does have very clear and stated strategic objectives. The Faculty acknowledges that it needs to formulate a plan in which these strategic objectives are progressed and developed. The University is currently developing its strategic plan and the Faculty plans to harmonize its strategic plan with it when the University's strategic plan is in place.

Criterion 1.2.

The Faculty has an effective and functioning organizational structure and clear lines of management. This is reflected in their statutes and other documents. It functions well at two levels, both at the educational and administrative levels. All committees work well.

Criterion 1.3.

The Faculty has had a very satisfactory relationship with the University since 1999, when it was incorporated. The Faculty is treated as an equal member at institutional, academic and personal levels. The Faculty contributes to the academic life of the University and has aligned its strategic objectives, mission and vision with the University strategy.

Criterion 1.4.

Most current study programmes are in line with institutional mission. The members of the Expert panel have seen the new Study Programme which has been developed by the Study Programme Committee in close collaboration with the professors and an external expert, and it will be implemented from the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year. The new Study Programme is better structured with improved and clearer learning outcomes and objectives. The Panel expects that it will enable the Faculty to fulfil its institutional mission more adequately. The renewed Study Programme compares favourably with study programmes in leading theology faculties in Europe.

Criterion 1.5.

The Faculty adopts the quality assurance guidelines and best practices of the University. The Quality Assurance Committee is composed of faculty members, an administrator and a student representative. The Quality Assurance Committee meets several times a

semester. The current focus of the Quality Assurance Committee is to further develop a strategy and a quality assurance manual. A positive element of quality assurance is the twice a semester student survey. The Faculty Committee is in on-going communication with the University Quality Assurance Committee which has only recently completed its own quality assurance manual.

Criterion 1.6.

The Faculty has begun a process of improving teaching quality. Faculty members have attended a number of workshops organized by the University. The Faculty management is conscious of its responsibility to teach new and young teachers how to use new teaching technologies and methods. Student surveys and feedback, in addition to teachers' self-reports, will contribute to the monitoring and improvement of teaching quality. Present mechanisms for monitoring and improving teaching quality are effective, efficient and comparable to those implemented at renowned European institutions.

Criterion 1.7.

The Faculty acknowledges that there is room for improvement here. While there are many individual research activities among faculty members and with personal contacts in Croatia and abroad, the management strategy for developing and implementing an overall institutional research programme is only at the initial stage. One faculty research project is being initiated at the moment in co-operation with some regional institutions. Until now the Faculty has concentrated on organizing national and international symposia and publishing the proceedings. The series of annual conferences organized by *Crkva u svijetu* is successful, but its themes – though each by itself is very interesting and relevant – do not reflect a clearly articulated, long-term Faculty research programme, which underlies the whole series.

Criterion 1.8.

The Faculty has a Code of Ethics which outlines mechanisms and procedures for dealing with complaints. A student ombudsperson is nominated. Programmes demonstrating how plagiarism can be detected have been shown to students.

Study programmes

Criterion 2.1.

The institution uses several methods for monitoring development, innovation and improvements to the existing study programs by the use of student surveys and

questionnaires, meetings between Faculty Council and students and annual teacher self-evaluation reports. As a result of this process, the Faculty has developed a new Study Programme which complies with the requirements of learning aims and outcomes, ECTS, etc.

In this process, the Faculty Council established a committee to renew the study programme. This new Study Programme meets the requirements of students, staff and stakeholders. The new Study Programme presented to the Panel of Experts in Split shows big improvement from the previous one, which was outlined in self-evaluation report of the Faculty. This is clear evidence that the Study Programme Committee has worked well and Faculty has good monitoring procedures. Internal and external stakeholders have been asked for their opinions about the programme.

Criterion 2.2.

The Faculty Council determines the enrolment quota having consulted the Central Application Office, the University and the Catechetical Office in the archdiocese. Having analysed the pastoral and socio-economic circumstances and the interests for the study programmes, the enrolment quota for 2012/13 was cut from 40 to 30 at the Integrated Philosophical-Theological Studies. The undergraduate Theological-Catechetical Study quota was reduced from 35 to 20; the Graduate Theological-Catechetical Study quota was reduced from 25 to 20. These were considered to be more in line with theological-pastoral and social-cultural needs in the region.

Criterion 2.3.

The student / teacher ratio is excellent. The enrolment quotas are optimum in relation to institutional size and the availability of teachers and research resources, and student pass rates. Analysis of first year students shows that the dropout rate is relatively low in recent years. Excluding students who discontinue their studies, almost all students achieve more than two-thirds of the ECTS credits of that year.

Criterion 2.4.

Until this academic year, learning outcomes for individual courses focused primarily on competences, that is, the acquisition of knowledge and comprehension, some skills and critical thinking. Competences after successful completion of individual study programmes were defined in line with the requirements of the University. However, in 2013/14, the University changed the form of module / programme descriptors which follow the Dublin descriptors and Bloom's taxonomy. In line with this development in the University, the Faculty drew up a new Study Programme in which modules and programmes clearly and coherently state course objectives and learning outcomes. It will be implemented as of 2014-2015.

Criterion 2.5.

Until this academic year, the assessment has been in line with evaluating competences primarily by written and oral examinations. In the new Study Programme, the assessment will include the whole spectrum of evaluation methods in line with the new learning outcomes and objectives, such as, mid-term examinations, continuous assessment and student activities and participation. These forms of assessment will vary according to the module or course, but will aim to equip students with enhanced social competence skills.

This coming May, the academic staff will participate in a workshop organized by the university which will enable them to adapt and to implement the new methods of assessment in line with the new Study Programme.

Criterion 2.6.

The ECTS were applied to the obligatory and elective courses. The ECTS credits were estimated realistically according to student workload, where one ECTS equalled 30 hours. The University criteria for allocating ECTS to the study of literature are adopted. For some courses in the new Study Programme, ECTS allocation has been revised. The Faculty intends to check if the ECTS-load is realistic once the new Study Programme is in effect.

Criterion 2.7.

The content and quality of the study programmes in the Faculty conform to internationally recognized standards. In addition to fulfilling the ecclesiastical requirements regulating all Catholic Theological Faculties, outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* and the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Faculty benchmarked their programmes with those given in leading European ecclesiastical faculties, for example, Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome), Innsbruck (Austria), KU-Leuven (Belgium), Tuebingen (Germany).

Criterion 2.8.

The methodology of teaching in the previous Study Programme concentrated more on frontal teaching. Staff also had access to new technologies, such as Moodle and on-line resources. Depending on the material being taught, practical and more active methods of teaching / learning were used. It seems that work on the new Study Programme also deepened the understanding of the importance of the didactical methods and the specific interests of students have been taken into consideration.

The new Study Programme encourages and facilitates a wider range of teaching methods. During the meeting with the Panel of Experts the academic staff confirmed knowledge in field of didactics, so active methods of teaching/learning will be fully integrated in the line with the new Study Programme.

Criterion 2.9.

The supplemental resources, especially the electronic journal databases, were impressive. The Faculty capitalizes on and uses effectively the electronic and IT resources provided nationwide by the state. All staff and students are familiar with those resources, trained in accessing and using them, and the Faculty has a dynamic and pro-active IT specialist.

Criterion 2.10.

As part of their academic programme and assessment, students are required to fulfil practical and supervised placements in schools, youth groups, community projects and parishes where they have the opportunity to apply their academic and social skills. Placement supervisors provide feedback to students and faculty teachers. Practical application of knowledge and skills are comparable to relevant practices of renowned European institutions, which in the case of theology is strongly connected with ecclesial institutions.

Students**Criterion 3.1.**

Student admission to the Faculty is determined by the State Matura and University regulations. Additionally, students must have taken 'religious education' in high school. Student motivation is also taken into consideration and is evaluated by interview. Students' motivation is expressed in their choosing CTF as their first and second choice location of study. The rules and procedure of enrolment are transparent and publicly advertised. The competences of applicants are assessed and match the requirements of the study programmes. It is not unusual for an applicant to be rejected after the assessment of his/her motivation and academic ability.

As the dropout rate is significant, further systematic analysis as to the reasons why students discontinue their studies, should be done. The conversations that are already held with the students concerned can provide important data for such analysis.

Criterion 3.2.

The institution supports and encourages the extracurricular activities of students. Students are informed about possible activities and involvements via announcement boards, internet, also by social partners (Catechetical centre, youth and Church organizations, etc.). Students are active as volunteers at public events and institutions of their future employers. The involvement of the local Catholic archdiocese in the process

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This coming May, the academic staff will participate in a workshop organized by the university which will enable them to adapt and to implement the new methods of assessment in line with the new Study Programme.

Criterion 2.6.

The ECTS were applied to the obligatory and elective courses. The ECTS credits were estimated realistically according to student workload, where one ECTS equalled 30 hours. The University criteria for allocating ECTS to the study of literature are adopted. For some courses in the new Study Programme, ECTS allocation has been revised. The Faculty intends to check if the ECTS-load is realistic once the new Study Programme is in effect.

Criterion 2.7.

The content and quality of the study programmes in the Faculty conform to internationally recognized standards. In addition to fulfilling the ecclesiastical requirements regulating all Catholic Theological Faculties, outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* and the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Faculty benchmarked their programmes with those given in leading European ecclesiastical faculties, for example, Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome), Innsbruck (Austria), KU-Leuven (Belgium), Tuebingen (Germany).

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The new Study Programme encourages and facilitates a wider range of teaching methods. During the meeting with the Panel of Experts the academic staff confirmed knowledge in field of didactics, so active methods of teaching/learning will be fully integrated in the line with the new Study Programme.

of studies contributes greatly to the quality of extracurricular training possibilities. The extracurricular activities seem sufficient when compared with practices of similar European institutions.

Criterion 3.3.

Personal and professional development of the students is ensured by offering counselling and mentoring during the course of their studies on both a professional and personal level. Psychological and spiritual counselling is available. As of recently (December 2013), each student is provided with a mentor for the entire study programme. Additional mentoring is provided by way of meetings between senior students and younger students. Ratio between teachers and students is of such a level as to ensure professors are available to meet students. Career guidance is provided by managers, professors and social partners of the institution.

Criterion 3.4.

Knowledge assessment procedures and methods are established, published and accessible by the students. Course descriptors and the manner of assessment are clear. Examination results can be appealed. The appeals procedure is clearly outlined and transparent. Students are informed about module descriptors and assessment at the beginning of each course unit. The pass rate is analysed and the assessment methods improved accordingly.

During the meeting of the Panel with the students and managers, it was noted that the assessment methods of certain professors do not always meet the requirements of the institution.

Criterion 3.5.

The Faculty maintains contacts with its former students. The Faculty has established an Alumni Club in order to improve the collection of data and communication with former students. The input of alumni is valued and contributes to the improvement of study programmes. The collection of these data is in its early stages and the Alumni Club has only recently been established.

Criterion 3.6.

The institution informs the public about its Study Programmes on the internet and at public meetings / open days with possible future students. Representatives of the Faculty visit schools and youth events, encouraging students to apply. Relevant information is accurate, sufficient and published in a timely manner. The Faculty organizes symposia and book presentations that are open to a wider audience, including prospective students. Individual faculty members regularly give public lectures and

participate in NGO's, thereby informing the public about the opportunities the Faculty offers to students.

Criterion 3.7.

Students are comfortable with expressing their opinions and questions about issues concerning their studies to staff. Because of the size of the Faculty, teaching staff and administration are easily available and approachable for students. The Faculty regularly organizes meetings with students where relevant issues can be freely discussed. At the University level, anonymous questionnaires for students about teaching quality are provided for feedback, the outcomes of which are processed by the University and returned to the Faculty and to the individual teachers. If the outcomes for a specific course are poor, the Dean reacts. The response by CTF students to the questionnaires is very high. There is a warm, positive and friendly atmosphere between staff and students facilitating constructive dialogue between them.

Criterion 3.8.

Students receive feedback and are informed of the results of their surveys and questionnaires. Due to the friendly atmosphere, student suggestions are often presented orally and via ICT communications. The Panel of Experts had the possibility to experience this open, face to face communication during the meeting with students. However, the managing staff has limited possibilities to ensure that effective measures are taken.

Teachers

Criterion 4.1.

There is an excellent teacher / student ratio in all study programmes (1:10), except for one doctoral programme. The teaching staff is very well qualified, holding doctoral degrees from a variety of leading European ecclesiastical institutions. While the Faculty employs sufficient number of qualified teaching staff to achieve its educational and research objectives, the Panel notes that there is a very small number of lay teachers, especially women.

Criterion 4.2.

Until now almost all members of the teaching staff were drawn from the two founding institutions of the Faculty, the Archdiocese and the Franciscan Order, who selected appropriate candidates for further professional academic training abroad in leading European ecclesiastical universities. More recently, the Faculty has advertised teaching

posts which have drawn wide interest. This policy of advertising and open competition for teaching posts will enable the most suitably qualified teacher to be employed and the possibility for a greater number of well qualified lay theologians to be hired.

Criterion 4.3.

As stated above, the teacher / student ratio is excellent except for one doctoral programme. The teaching workload is evenly distributed among staff, similar to European theological faculties.

Criterion 4.4.

The management encourages teachers to undertake on-going professional development, particularly to avail of research and teaching sabbaticals abroad, to participate in local, national and international symposia, to attend training and quality assurance workshops arranged by the University, and to actively access and use the technological and IT resources of the institution. New teaching staff must receive specific didactical training. Currently, two teachers of the Faculty are on teaching and research sabbaticals in London and Rome. While the elements of on-going professional training are evident and actively encouraged by the management, it is acknowledged that there is a need for a more systematic policy around this.

Criterion 4.5.

The Faculty follows Ministry of Higher Education regulations in relation to teaching workloads and the management ensures that all staff members get the appropriate time necessary to fulfil their teaching responsibilities, research and administrative duties. The information on teachers' workload from self-evaluation report and obtained from the academic teachers during the site-visit prove that teaching load is fairly distributed.

Criterion 4.6.

While many of the teaching staff have commitments outside the Faculty, each member is required to submit a list of those commitments to the management team each year to ensure that they do not negatively impact on the efficiency and quality of their teaching and research. Any new commitment on the part of a teacher must be submitted to the Faculty Council for approval. Teaching staff and management expressed confidence that their external commitments mostly enriched their teaching and research.

Scientific and Professional Activity

Criterion 5.1.

In 2010 the Faculty initiated (preparing a draft), and in 2011 adopted *Teaching and Scientific Strategy Development of Catholic Theological Faculty 2010-2015*. But until now, according to the organizational structure, each chair had its own research activity; however, the management does not have an overall long-term coherent strategic plan of the Faculty's research activity. While there is clear evidence of quality and interesting individual research, there is less evidence of co-operation between the chairs of the Faculty. The Faculty needs to prepare the strategic programme for the whole institution with all key elements.

Criterion 5.2.

The Faculty has a successful record of organizing national conferences which attract many teachers of theology from Croatia and some from other countries. The members of the Faculty have developed and nurture strong links and co-operation with other theology faculties in Croatia, and participate in conferences organized by them. The Faculty has had limited success, however, in relation to conferences that attract a large number of international participants, in part, due to linguistic challenges and the young nature of the Faculty. Again, on an individual basis, members of the Faculty occasionally participate in international conferences and international experts are invited to attend the conferences. But the international cooperation with the scientific organizations needs to be improved.

Criterion 5.3.

The Faculty has an adequate number of researchers in all relevant fields. Current vacancies are in the process of being filled.

Criterion 5.4.

The Faculty only partly fulfilled the criterion of having an adequate number of high-quality scientific papers published in scientific journals. Most researchers on the Faculty publish in scientific journals in Croatia (A1 and A2), and mostly in the publications of their own Faculty, so publications tend to be more regional and national than international. The Expert Panel understands the situation of post-socialist countries in Europe and the challenge of mastering languages (especially English), but compared to the number of researchers on the Faculty, the number of publications suggests that here there is room for improvement here.

Criterion 5.5.

The institution recognizes and encourages high-quality research by organizing conferences, symposia, workshops, etc. However, as mentioned earlier, there is no systematic policy around this. Nevertheless, a significant development and policy

objective by the management is to translate the best publications of Faculty members into English.

Criterion 5.6.

Compared to the number of researchers on the Faculty, the number of publications suggests that there is room for improvement here. As mentioned before, a large number of the peer-reviewed scientific publications come out in journals published by the Faculty.

For a relatively small faculty, it has a two quality peer-reviewed scientific journals. One A1 Journal - *Crkva u svijeta* (Church in the World) was founded in 1966 with the aim to explore and study current social-religious issues and questions, and is published four times annually. The members of the Faculty and many other theologians from Croatia publish in this journal. The editorial board includes three international editors. While published in Croatian, article abstracts are published in English and Italian in the Religion and Theology Abstracts. The articles are also published on-line on the Faculty website.

Another A2 Journal - *Služba Božja* (God's Service), a liturgical-pastoral review, is published four times annually. Articles in this publication are written mostly by Faculty members with other theologians from Croatia and even from abroad also publishing in it. Each issue is theme specific. As in the above journal, all articles are peer reviewed and also published on-line on the Faculty website.

Criterion 5.7.

Only one member of the Faculty participated in an international project, the *Komunikative Theologie* hosted by the Theological Faculty of Innsbruck. One interesting and regional project commemorating the writings of a local archaeologist is awaiting approval. There are a number of interesting individual research initiatives related to the human consequences of the Balkan War and religion in film. However, the researches of the Faculty need to develop their potential and cooperate in more efficient way with international partners

Criterion 5.8.

The academic and research work of the Faculty contribute to public discourse and debate both regionally and nationally in social-religious issues. All of the staff and students are involved in local and voluntary community, social, NGO, educational and religious organizations. School and parish placements and outreach are related to the institution's mission.

The Faculty responds in a very positive way to the needs of transforming society helping to overcome mental, historical, ethnical, religious and cultural barriers. The institution has also some research projects in which Faculty researchers, students and members of

other institutions work together: e.g. the collaboration between the Faculty, the city of Solin, the Archaeological Museum and the History department of the University; or the bio-ethical research project which involves medical doctors and homes for elderly.

Criterion 5.9.

Not applicable.

Criterion 5.10.

The Faculty initiated two doctoral programmes four years ago. One of the doctoral programmes, Christianity and Contemporary Culture, has an adequate number of mentors and actively involved students. The second programme, History of Theology and Christian Institutions, does not have any fully employed mentors belonging to the Faculty (there are mentors employed from outside the Faculty) mostly due to the recent retirement of a number of Faculty members. This doctoral programme has a low number of actively involved students and a declining number of applications. There are currently no completed PhD theses and therefore the Panel was unable to express any opinion about the quality of this programme. The Panel has serious concerns about the sustainability of this doctoral programme and this should be addressed immediately by the Faculty.

Mobility and international cooperation

Criterion 6.1.

The institution has clear and defined rules and criteria for admitting students from other HEIs. Rules and opportunities are announced on the institution's website, but only in Croatian. The institution ensures recognition of previously taken courses in an efficient and transparent way; diplomas of previously completed studies in other HEIs are recognized. The student services actively support such mobility.

However, while national student (and teacher) mobility is sufficient, management and coordinators of international relations should find more effective ways to attract students from other HEIs abroad since the number of such students is low (3 students in the past three years). The English version of the Faculty's website is still under construction.

Criterion 6.2.

The institution has signed the Erasmus Charter and has taken initial steps in searching for Erasmus partners and signing Erasmus agreements. The Faculty has a good relationship with the University's Erasmus-coordinator. The website provides all

needed information. All structures necessary for successful implementation of international mobility are established. It is common practice for doctorate students to spend part of their studies in HEIs abroad. Credit mobility is recognized by their home institution. Additional mobility possibilities are provided by main social partner of the institution – the local archdiocese, which has solid relationship with dioceses and Catholic HEIs abroad (e.g. Rome, Germany and Austria).

Unfortunately, mobility opportunities are not used by students of the institution. The Faculty should put more effort into motivating students to use mobility opportunities and inform and encourage them actively in the very early stages of studies. The lack of student motivation may come from not taking advantage of foreign language courses offered by the University. Thus importance of foreign language skills should be emphasized by the Faculty.

Criterion 6.3.

The most prominent dimension of international mobility is demonstrated by the fact that most of the teaching staff of the faculty had acquired their scientific degrees in foreign institutions and kept active relationship with those institutions since then. Several teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina participate in the postgraduate studies at the institution. Some teachers of the institution teach at the foreign HEIs on a regular basis. International contacts of returning teachers are used in developing further relationship with foreign institutions.

However, the number of Erasmus agreements is not sufficient for more effective mobility activities. The institution should cooperate with a greater number of foreign institutions to ensure better mobility opportunities to teachers and students. Greater variety of countries should be considered.

The international cooperation in scientific research is not sufficient. Most articles of researchers are published in Croatian scientific journals. There are no international projects at the institution.

Criterion 6.4.

Initial steps are being made towards more active international cooperation. On a personal level, some teachers have developed international relations in their research field. Some teachers have sent papers to international journals, yet only a few of them have been published to date.

The English version of the Faculty's website is still under construction, so it is impossible to talk about the attractiveness of potential international cooperation. Development of a policy for international collaboration is at the initial stage. Teachers and students mobility has to be increased. A long-term strategy for international scientific cooperation has to be created.

Criterion 6.5.

The current situation indicates lack of efficient policy in attracting students from abroad. The institution currently does not have adequate conditions for attracting students from abroad. There are no courses in the major foreign languages at the institution. There are no elective courses taught in English or other foreign languages. The management has not yet developed a sufficient strategy for attracting foreign students. Having many academic teachers who has finished their studies abroad and such a learning friendly environment, the Faculty has the potential to attract incoming international students, but obviously needs more promotional activities.

Criterion 6.6.

There were no visiting teachers for the last three years, although two visiting foreign teachers came to the institution in the last three months. This suggests that some improvements in the area of international exchange are taking place and gives hope for the future. The Faculty has a good infrastructure for incoming teachers (office space, administrative support), but the low level of students' foreign language skills seems to be a strong obstacle.

Additionally, the institution still does not have a sufficient number of Erasmus or other international agreements; strategy of international relations is not well developed. The Faculty should broaden their horizons of international cooperation.

Criterion 6.7.

The institution has the potential to develop successful international relations. However, the current state of international cooperation is not yet sufficient. Individual academic teachers of the Faculty are members of international organisations, attend the international conferences and use their contacts to internationalize the institution.

Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances**Criterion 7.1.**

Although the Faculty building is somewhat old and plans for a new one are being developed, the overall quality of the facilities (classrooms, library, computer rooms, etc.) is very satisfactory. The physical environment is conducive to study. There is a specially equipped lecture-room with eleven installed computers reserved for student work. Students may use student computers during working hours of the Faculty, and also have access to the computers by using codes provided to them by system engineer at their enrolment. The Panel's tour of the facilities during the visit confirms the high standard of Faculty infrastructure.

Criterion 7.2.

The ratio between teaching and non-teaching staff is satisfactory. Teachers and students are satisfied with the number and availability of support staff. Contacts with administrative staff confirmed their openness, communicative skills and eagerness to support both teachers and students.

Criterion 7.3.

The non-teaching staff are well trained for the tasks they are appointed to do. Furthermore, the Faculty encourages and provides means to the non-teaching staff to continue professional development. The Panel of Experts was especially impressed with the quality, effectiveness, kindness, openness and communicative skills of non-teaching staff. The support provided for teaching staff and students is excellent.

Criterion 7.4.

Since the Faculty has no laboratories, the criterion is not applicable.

Criterion 7.5.

The institution is well equipped with modern technology. Each classroom is equipped with multimedia. The laptops are provided to professors to ensure teaching quality. Technical support is functioning efficiently, supporting staff is well trained and very helpful, especially to those academic teachers who are not yet experts in ICT. Academic teachers have access to network through CARNet service provider. In September 2013, a new server IBM X3650 M4 was implemented.

Criterion 7.6.

Students and teaching staff can use both University and Faculty libraries. In addition to library facilities students can use the study room. The library has the necessary literature both in national and international languages. An inter-library loan system is operative. The institution has required funds for the constant renewal of the library resources. Teachers and researchers can order books needed for teaching and research. Renowned online scientific databases can be easily accessed both from the institution and from homes.

Criterion 7.7.

Finances of the institution are sufficient to continue with the mission of institution. Sources and allocation of funding are transparent. Additional funding is provided by the local Catholic archdiocese and social partners.

Criterion 7.8.

Even though the institution does not generate income through its activities it successfully integrates University and additional funding in raising the quality of study process.